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The second Paper read was—

2. *A Journey from Nazareth to Bozrah of Moab.*

By F. A. EATON, Esq., M.A.

The Author commenced by stating that a fortunate rencontre with the Rev. Mr. Zeller, long resident in the country, induced the party of which the writer was a member, to abandon the beaten track from Jerusalem to Nazareth and Damascus, and, starting eastward from Nazareth, to explore the Hauran, a country east of the Jordan, as far as Bozrah of Moab. Such a tour, it was found, occupied but a fortnight, and is entirely safe as well as deeply interesting if accompanied by any one personally acquainted with the Arab Druse Sheiks.

Leaving Nazareth, the party first made for the encampment of Agleeby Agha. The road led along the north-east edge of the Plain of Esdraelon (Scriptural Jezreel), which it reached just beneath Mount Tabor. Leaving the plain and crossing the Wady Bireh, the Wady es Shirar is reached, in whose course were perceived what seemed to be ruins of reservoirs and aqueducts. In four hours after starting began to ascend hills to west of Jordan, on reaching the summit of which there lay extended below a view from Lake Tiberias to the Dead Sea. The old bridge by which the river was crossed is traditionally said to mark the spot at which Jacob and Esau met. At sunset of first day reached the Agha's encampment. Thence passed the Yarmâk (ancient Hieromax), and entered the Tetrarchical provinces of Peræa and Gaulonitis (? Scriptural Bashan and Gilead). Scenery very wild. Visited second day the hot springs of Amatha, 110° Fahr.; country generally of volcanic formation. In vicinity of springs are remains of a Roman bath. Reached Umkeis at 1 P.M., where the escort ceased. A Bedouin of the Beni Sukhr was here adopted as guide, and led the travellers due east along a crest of a range separating the Sherfat-el-Mandhûr from the Wady el Arab. Soil rocky, but thickly covered with stone-oak. Before entering the open plain beyond, passed numerous towers in the gorge. Put up with Sheikh Abdallah, of the Beni Sukhr, who was very hospitable, and occupied a region much resembling an English village-landscape. Made next day for Mezarîb, a pilgrimage-station from Damascus, nearly due east, in order to get letters from the Governor of the Haurân, whose residence is here. The Wady Shelâleh, which was crossed the same day, and is described as flowing through a deep gorge, is the same as the Wady Warran, which forms the boundary north-west of the Djebel Ajlûn, and afterwards joining the Sheriat el Mandhûr. Course changed to due north; thence over a vast, level, treeless plain, covered with barley.

Reached the Haj (or pilgrimage-road) where it crosses the Wady Dâre by an old stone bridge which marks the western boundary of Haurân proper. Country singularly flat. Mezarib is a large, old, square fortress, with a few huts within its *enceinte*, and is only garrisoned during the Haj to protect the Damascus pilgrims on their road to and from Mekka. The visit taking place just at the period of the Haj, there were no fewer than 1000 infantry—perhaps more than were required; but in reality these concentrations of troops have a political object. Next point was Der'a, whence they hoped to reach Bozrah. Still the same flat plains, and passed a ruined village with stone roofs, indicating they had arrived in the Haurân. Next crossed the Wady Dâu, near which is an old Roman bridge of five arches, the shape of the buttresses evidently showing that the stream now and for ages past has run into the Sheriat el Mandhûr. Der'a is supposed to mark the site of the capital of the Kings of Bashan, though Mr. Porter prefers Edh'ra, as more easily fortifiable. At this point had to get a native Arab to act as guide. Next day passed numerous villages and reached Bozrah, whence there is a Roman road to Darû, which their road struck to the south. At this point they turned northwards by Dâmâ, a fort amid hills, whence they followed the ordinary often-described road to Damascus.

The CHAIRMAN said the part of the Paper which was of special interest related to the visit to El-Lejah. El-Lejah was a country which had been unrecorded, and to the best of his knowledge untravelled. He did not know how far Burckhardt went into the country; but El-Lejah was a mountain fastness said to be of curious geological formation, and he hoped Mr. Eaton would favour them with a word or two upon the subject.

Mr. EATON said the party with which he travelled had very little opportunity of visiting El-Lejah. Their visit was confined to a day, or a day and a half. It was very hurried, and afforded them no opportunity of studying the architecture of the villages and towns, or to mark even the inscriptions. The spot was very remarkable, being a sort of island-rock, in the midst of a level plain; it began as abruptly as the rocks on the sea-shore. They did not go into that part which had been described by Mr. Porter, and also by Mr. Cyril Graham, where there are very deep ravines; that part lay more to the north and west of El-Lejah; whereas the part which they visited was to the east, where the surface consisted of ledges and occasionally rough rock. The point they started from was midway between Ormân and Damascus; and at Dâmâ they were hospitably received by the Arab sheikh. The people supplied them with coffee, and refreshment of every kind; with water for their horses, which, considering they had to fetch every drop of the water from a distance of six miles on mules, was a great proof of the hospitality which they showed. There were about seventy or eighty people in all; and they had taken up their quarters there as a refuge from the Turkish Government. It was an admirable natural fortress; for there was only one entrance to it, which would be easily defended by ten or twelve resolute men. The towns in El-Lejah were certainly very numerous, and the remains very interesting. In the town of Dâmâ they saw a great deal of that peculiar architecture which was common to the country. There were some great stone doors, 10 or 12 feet high, which turned on their sockets with the greatest ease. They were of immense weight, and were hung on the ball-and-socket principle, great solid stones being used as

lintels at the top and bottom. With regard to their extreme antiquity, there was reason to doubt it; but the doors themselves, and the materials out of which they were made, might be of very great antiquity. He had also great reason to doubt the antiquity of many of the houses at present standing. They were all of the same kind, one as like another as possible. As the ruins around the place were of Roman origin, he thought that the doors were not of greater antiquity. The last purpose to which they had been applied was a mosque; and in the mosque you could trace signs of a Roman temple; and in the material itself you could trace signs of a still older building. At one spot there was a specimen of Cyclopean architecture, consisting of large rough stones, put together with mortar: that was the only specimen they saw which seemed to be ante-Roman.

The particular part which the Chairman had referred to as being untravelled before was that which is arrived at immediately after crossing the Jordan. He understood that Lord Lindsay traversed the country near there, and he believed Dr. Beke had come across that route, but he thought that the particular part where he and his party experienced the hospitality of the Arab Sheikh, had never been visited by Europeans before, at least there was no public mention of it. As to the identification of cities with names in the Old Testament, he was not prepared to say how far that could be established. No doubt there were many villages which might be identified rather by resemblance of names than anything else, and at best the identity must be more or less fanciful. The tribes were said to be most unruly and most lawless, and travellers had been deterred from crossing the country in consequence of the character which they possessed. The natives would try to get out of travellers all that they could by legal means, and if they failed in that they would endeavour to rob them; but to those acquainted with the language there was every facility afforded for going into that part of the country if they were so disposed.

MR. CYRIL GRAHAM said there was only one point which he wished to bring before the meeting,—that that portion of Mr. Eaton's track through El-Lejah which coincided with the old Roman road was new to Europeans. Burckhardt, Dr. Wetstein, and himself, had examined the ruins further to the west; the substructures, and in many cases the buildings, of which, although subsequently embellished by Roman chisels, are undoubtedly of more ancient workmanship. The probable fact that the houses and other structures along the line of the Roman road rose up in consequence of its existence, would sufficiently account for the remark made by Mr. Eaton with reference to the comparatively recent origin of the remains, which he saw. Had time permitted, he (Mr. Graham) should have wished to say much more on the subject of the Paper which had just been read to them; but, considering the lateness of the hour, he felt himself bound to conclude by calling the attention of the meeting once more to the chief point in Mr. Eaton's journey—the tracing of the Roman road.

The meeting was then adjourned to 11th Jan., 1864.

Fourth Meeting, Monday Evening, January 11, 1864.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*The Rev. William Byrnes; David Chambers, Esq.; John Conder, Esq.; Angus A. Croll, Esq.; John Ferguson, Esq.; Lieut. Francis Fitzpatrick; Mons. C. T. Fortuné; Capt. William John Foster; Charles Grierson, Esq.; Benjamin Hardwick, Esq.; John Harvey, Esq.; Robert Henderson, Esq.; William Gunston Hovell, Esq.; Capt. George F. Lamert;*

Francis Richardson, Esq.; E. J. Routh, Esq.; Grenville Ryder, Esq.; Mutu Coomaroo Swamy; Richard B. Wade, Esq.

ACCESSIONS to LIBRARY.—‘*Marvels of Friar Jordanus*,’ by Colonel Henry Yule, C.B., F.R.G.S., presented by the Hakluyt Society. ‘*Buddhism in Tibet*,’ by Dr. Schlagintweit. ‘*Results of a Scientific Mission to India and High Asia, undertaken between the years 1855-58*,’ by Hermann, Adolphe, and Robert de Schlagintweit; Vol. iii. ‘*Wanderings in West Africa*,’ by a F.R.G.S. ‘*A Treatise on the Chronology of Siriadic Monuments*,’ by Hekekyan Bey, C.E. ‘*Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*,’ by Capt. J. H. Speke, F.R.G.S. ‘*Abeokuta and the Camaroons Mountain*,’ by Capt. R. F. Burton, F.R.G.S. ‘*Continuations of Transactions of various Societies, &c. &c.*’

ACCESSIONS to MAP-ROOM from DEC. 14th to DEC. 23rd.—South Polar Chart, by A. Petermann. Railway Map of proposed Metropolitan and Suburban lines (1864), by E. Stanford. Continuation of the Trigonometrical Survey of India, on 13 sheets. Part 3 of Schlagintweit’s Atlas.

The first Paper read was—

1. *On the Non-Auriferous Character of the Rocks of West Australia.* By E. C. HARGREAVES. From a Despatch of His Excellency Sir GEORGE BOWEN, Governor of Queensland, to His Grace the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, and communicated by the Colonial Office.

MR. HARGREAVES, who first practically opened out the gold-mines of Australia, having been sent to examine West Australia, with the view of determining if, as had been loosely asserted, it would prove to be auriferous, has, after various excursions into the interior, reported, that although rich in iron and copper ores, its rocks, so different from those of New South Wales and Victoria, render it essentially a non-auriferous region. Relying upon the absence of those rocks, which Sir Roderick Murchison (to whom he refers) had cited as the only true *matrices* of gold in veinstones, he shows that the statement that that geologist had ever suggested that West Australia would be found to be a gold-producing country, was entirely unfounded. Mr. Hargreaves had sent home numerous specimens of the rocks.

The PRESIDENT, in expressing the customary vote of thanks to the author of the Paper, said Mr. Hargreaves was the first practical explorer of the gold-mines of Australia. He had been sent out by Government to see if Western Australia would prove auriferous. He had stated what was certainly a fact, that he (the President) never had the remotest idea of suggesting that Western Australia would prove auriferous; on the contrary, he knew very well from what had been previously said of the structure of these rocks, and from the fossils and